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AUTHOR Braun, John R.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the fakability of the Edwards Personality Inventory (EPI). Results indicate that Edwards was not successful in his attempts to control for social desirability. (CK)

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Fakability of the Edwards Personality Inventory: Overview and Integration of Results

John R. Braun, John J. Tinley, and Robert M. Farrell

University of Bridgeport

The Edwards Personality Inventory (EPI) consists of five 300-item booklets providing scores on a total of 53 personality variables descriptive of the behavior of normal individuals. The EPI has two special features. First, contrary to other inventories, the examinee is asked to respond to the EPI items as he believes those individuals who know him best would answer if asked to describe him. Second, in developing the EPI, a deliberate and systematic attempt was made to minimize the correlations with social desirability of most of the scales. To the extent to which social desirability was controlled in the EPI, we might expect faking possibilities to be reduced. Braun (1970) investigated the fakability of booklet IV, with one group given standard instructions, and another given instructions to create a favorable impression of themselves while also concealing their faking. It was found that the faking instructions had significant effects on only three of the 13 booklet IV scales.

In a followup reported at the 1970 Northeast Educational Research Association convention, Tinley and Braun investigated whether EPI booklets IA, II, and III would show similar resistance to faking. 201 university students were randomly assigned to either a control group completing one of the EPI booklets (IA, II, or III) under standard instructions, or an experimental group under faking instructions with concealment warning as in the Booklet IV study. For all 40 scales comprising the three booklets, t tests were used to assess the significance of the difference between control and experimental group means. The differences between control and experimental means reached significance ($p = .05$) on 17 of the 40 scales. The three booklets differed among themselves in fakability, with only one variable significantly influenced by faking instructions for booklet II, but with eight variables affected in both booklets IA and III.

Finally, in data reported for the first time in this paper, Farrell has completed a partial replication of the Tinley & Braun study with booklet IA, and has also investigated booklet IB fakability. Farrell administered the EPI to four groups of subjects, with N = 50 in each group. Each person was tested on two occasions in order to compare the reliability of standard administration scores with that of faked administration scores. This particular analysis is not the concern of the present paper, so we shall simply mention that he found reliability of standard administration scores significantly higher than faked.

The design of the Farrell study afforded three independent replications of the Tinley and Braun Booklet IA study. Thus in Tables 2 and 3

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we have two of these replications in which Test Session One involved half the Ss completing Booklet IA under standard instructions while half completed it under faking instructions (without however, any concealment of faking warning). Likewise, Table 2 shows a similar analysis in which Booklet IA was completed at Test Session Two under instructions identical with those originally used for the particular Ss. Finally, Table 3 presents the data on Test Session Two, at which time persons who had completed Booklet IA at Session One under particular instructions, now completed Booklet IB under instructions identical with their original ones. In terms of the analysis of fakability however, note that we are not comparing persons' performances across two occasions. Instead, we are comparing performance of independent groups across different instructions on a particular occasion (either Test Session One or Two).

The overall pattern of the Farrell results is quite consistent with those of Tinley and Braun, with perhaps a suggestion of greater differences between standard and faked means due to the lack of warning to Ss about responding in such a manner as to conceal their faking. No formal statistical test has yet been performed to verify this impression. Booklet IB appears to be as fakable as Booklet IA.

When data are pooled across the four main EPI booklets which were investigated under the same faking instructions, we find a total of 20 of the 53 EPI scales to be fakable. The results demonstrate that Edwards was not successful in his attempts to control for social desirability. Reasons for this may involve the operation of contextual effects on judgments of social desirability, and the existence of individual viewpoints regarding what is desirable.

References

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Table 1

Means and t values for control and experimental groups

for Booklets IA, II, III, and IV

Faking instructions with concealment warning

Variable	Booklet IA Control Mean (N=33)	Booklet IA Experimental Mean (N=34)	t	Variable	Booklet II Control Mean (N=34)	Booklet II Experimental Mean (N=33)	t
A	11.82	15.97	3.33**	A	16.59	12.45	1.93
B	18.61	24.94	4.80**	B	5.91	6.91	1.18
C	11.39	14.79	2.74**	C	17.15	17.97	0.58
D	10.88	14.03	3.77**	D	7.41	6.56	0.60
E	8.00	12.35	4.65**	E	15.21	13.12	0.78
F	7.42	6.76	0.79	F	8.62	5.12	3.53**
G	12.73	15.26	2.34*	G	11.68	9.55	0.71
H	8.73	7.76	0.96	H	8.32	6.34	1.03
I	11.24	16.18	3.60**	I	11.41	11.09	0.05
J	14.12	13.68	0.47	J	6.59	5.85	0.60
K	11.30	9.94	1.02	K	20.18	16.36	1.10
L	11.85	11.12	0.98				
M	8.21	9.65	2.01*				
N	19.03	21.62	1.76				

Variable	Booklet III Control Mean (N=33)	Booklet III Experimental Mean (N=34)	t	Variable	Booklet IV+ Control Mean (N=53)	Booklet IV+ Experimental Mean (N=55)	t
A	16.06	19.18	2.70**	A	13.58	13.75	0.09
B	7.73	9.00	2.36*	B	10.47	9.64	0.57
C	15.24	16.82	1.27	C	10.77	10.40	0.44
D	18.58	24.09	2.48*	D	11.96	9.93	1.62
E	16.61	17.32	0.54	E	7.15	5.53	2.28*
F	12.94	15.56	2.66**	F	16.62	17.91	0.96
G	9.94	14.29	3.07**	G	5.40	5.38	0.03
H	9.45	10.56	1.14	H	15.60	15.93	0.51
I	5.55	6.71	2.01*	I	19.72	21.07	1.52
J	9.06	11.38	2.61*	J	8.36	7.18	1.05
K	5.39	6.29	0.89	K	6.96	6.93	0.03
L	11.91	12.53	0.68	L	4.81	6.67	2.58*
M	5.48	6.38	1.60	M	12.81	16.95	3.29**
N	17.97	19.21	0.78				
O	6.79	8.12	2.21*				

* significant at the .05 level
**significant at the .01 level

+Braun, J. R., Edwards Personality Inventory, Booklet IV: Faking and Faking Detection. Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance, 1970, 3, 86-87.

TABLE 2

BOOKLET IA MEANS AND t VALUES FOR TEST-RETEST CONDITIONS: STANDARD VERSUS FAKING INSTRUCTIONS

	Test Session One			Test Session Two		
	Faking instructions - no concealment warning					
Variable	Standard Mean (N = 50)	Faking Mean (N = 50)	t	Standard Mean (N = 50)	Faking Mean (N = 50)	t
A	10.66	16.80	6.497**	11.38	17.04	5.900**
B	16.82	25.52	8.579**	17.38	25.62	7.390**
C	9.34	16.72	9.517**	9.90	17.04	7.980**
D	9.88	14.64	7.413**	9.90	14.88	7.455**
E	8.58	14.74	9.100**	9.54	14.64	7.390**
F	6.78	6.74	0.059	7.36	6.06	1.823
G	12.10	17.46	7.800**	13.78	18.26	6.409**
H	8.52	9.38	0.917	8.56	9.44	0.900
I	10.08	16.64	6.780**	10.52	16.22	5.449**
J	15.10	15.56	0.687	15.32	15.72	0.575
K	12.08	8.34	3.340**	11.68	8.48	2.560*
L	11.08	11.18	0.171	11.24	11.56	0.514
M	7.62	8.54	1.675	7.76	9.14	2.530*
N	20.76	21.74	0.974	21.46	21.84	0.328

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

TABLE 3

MEANS AND t VALUES FOR ALTERNATE-FORMS CONDITIONS: STANDARD VERSUS FAKING INSTRUCTIONS

	Test Session One Booklet IA			Test Session Two Booklet IB		
Faking instructions - no concealment warning						
Variable	Standard Mean (N = 50)	Faking Mean (N = 50)	t	Standard Mean (N = 50)	Faking Mean (N = 50)	t
A	10.16	17.68	9.359**	10.82	17.20	7.809**
B	17.86	25.88	8.674**	17.62	26.20	8.460**
C	10.38	17.46	9.007**	10.64	16.42	6.600**
D	10.42	15.16	8.207**	10.34	15.30	7.725**
E	8.52	13.74	6.460**	8.54	15.74	9.717**
F	7.28	6.24	1.510	7.32	8.10	1.107
G	13.24	17.10	5.376**	13.52	19.18	7.916**
H	8.30	9.60	1.458	8.46	9.24	0.968
I	10.82	16.36	5.598**	10.60	17.20	7.357**
J	13.72	16.04	3.847**	13.78	16.76	4.950**
K	11.50	8.60	2.559*	11.68	8.42	2.720**
L	10.30	10.92	0.925	9.90	12.80	3.737**
M	8.18	8.40	0.349	9.68	8.92	1.279
N	20.72	22.78	2.153*	21.00	23.82	3.270**

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level